MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., JULY 8, 1940.

The first meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1941, was held in its office in the Interior Department on Monday, July 8, 1940. The following members were present:

Mr. Clarke, Chairman,
Mr. Savage,
Mr. Lamb,
Mr. Manship,
Mr. Bruce,
Dr. Cret,
Mr. Holabird,
also H. P. Caemmerer,

Secretary and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a. m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The Minutes of the meeting held May 17, 1940, were approved.

2. CERAMICS FOR THE MUNICIPAL CENTER BUILDING: The Chairman reported that a few weeks ago he requested Mr. Savage and Mr. Manship to inspect work on the ceramics at the studios of Hildreth Meiere and Waylande Gregory and that as a result of the inspection, Mr. Savage made a report, as follows:

> "As requested by you, Mr. Manship and I called at the studio of Miss Meiere in New York on June 10th and the studio of Mr. Waylande Gregory at Bound Brook, New Jersey, on June 20th for inspection of their progress on ceramic sculpture-mural compositions for one of the courts of the Municipal Center in Washington.
>
> "We found that in each case the compositions had gained in effectiveness with further study; the approach to their execution has been fundamentally thorough and that only minor details came into question."

The Chairman said that Miss Meiere raises the question whether that approval should be considered as being final. The Commission agreed that no further inspection should be made and letter of approval was sent to Mr. Wyeth. (Exhibit A)

The ceramics will be put on the exterior walls of the court of the new Municipal Center Building; they will measure 8 by 78 feet and will depict activities of the District of Columbia Government.

3. SCULPTURAL RELIEFS, MUNICIPAL CENTER: Mr. Manship reported that a few days ago he inspected full sized models by John Gregory and Lee Lawrie, sculptors, for the new Municipal Center. The sculpture is to be placed on the cheek blocks flanking the steps of the terrace on John Marshall Place as part of the Municipal Center development. Mr. Manship said he had approved both models enthusiastically. The Commission concurred in the report of Mr. Manship, and Mr. Wyeth was informed accordingly. (Exhibit B)

4. MODEL FOR EAGLE, SOCIAL SECURITY BUILDING: The Chairman reported that pursuant to an inspection by Mr. Manship of the full sized model of the eagle by Richmond Barthe, sculptor, New York, for the Social Security Building, he had informed the Section of Fine Arts of that approval. The Commission concurred in the report. (Exhibit C)

Later in the day Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect, presented sketches for the treatment of the panel over the entrance of the Social Security Building. The Commission considered them and selected one which they thought would be satisfactory, if given some further study. It was noted that this sculptural treatment of the panel would necessitate an elimination of the eagle by Mr. Barthe. Mr. Bruce called attention to this but it was understood that the eagle could be placed over the entrance of some other doorway to the building. Mr. Simon said he would submit further sketches in detail for the panel at the next meeting of the Commission.

5. RESIDENCES AT KLINGLE ROAD AND PORTER STREET: The secretary submitted designs for eight small houses proposed for erection at Klingle Road and Porter

Street, N. W., adjacent to Rock Creek Park, that had been received from the Building Inspector, District of Columbia, Application No. 844, dated June 11, 1940. A perspective had also been received from the architect, Mr. Joseph Abel, and also photographs of the location were presented.

The secretary reported that a number of protests had been received from the residents of the locality against the erection of these small houses because it was feared they represented a cheap type of development; whereas the existing houses nearby cost as much as $15,000 to $20,000. A copy of a letter of protest addressed to Colonel McCoach, Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, by Col. Edwin A. Halsey, Secretary of the United States Senate, was as follows:

June 19, 1940.

Dear Colonel:

There are being built on the corner of Twenty-fourth and Porter Streets, Northwest, some new houses. We are informed that they will be only of four and five rooms in size.

In view of the homes already built in the Klingle sub-division, I do not believe that these small homes will be in keeping and consequently will undermine the value of the property already there.

This should be taken into consideration as those of us living in this small group of houses on Williamsburg Lane, formerly Twenty-fourth Street, have made investments up to $25,000, and the smaller, cheaper houses will tend to diminish these investments.

Under the zoning law I do not think these smaller houses should be permitted to be built and will appreciate it if you will investigate the matter.

Appreciating your courtesy,

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Edwin A. Halsey,
Secretary to the United States Senate.

The secretary also informed the Commission that he had ascertained from the National Capital Park and Planning Commission that it was proposed by the Commission to purchase the first three lots adjacent to Klingle Road. Mr. T. E.

Jeffers, landscape architect of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, was present and submitted a map showing the location of the three lots in question that would be added to the District of Columbia park area.

The architect members of the Commission inspected the designs of the houses. Mr. Lamb said the first one was objectionable but the others were not bad. The Commission felt that it had no jurisdiction over the cost of the houses but regretted that in a situation such as this, control could not be exercised by the Zoning Commission.

Mr. John D. Rhodes, official reporter of the U. S. Senate, came personally to protest against the erection of these small houses, stating that they would be a detriment in the plan of development of the community. After consideration it was decided that since the National Capital Park and Planning Commission is negotiating with the owner to purchase land included in this submission, the status of the submission apparently had changed and that when negotiations were completed, the matter should be resubmitted. The plans were thereupon returned to the Building Inspector with a report to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia. (Exhibit D)

6. RESIDENCES, WEST BEACH DRIVE: The secretary presented a design received from John Whalen, architect, for four residences designed in colonial style of architecture, proposed for erection on West Beach Drive adjacent to Rock Creek Park at the head of 16th Street.

The architect members of the Commission inspected the designs and interposed no objection to them. The Commission agreed to the suggestion of Mr. Clarke, according to changes noted on the plot plan by him, that the houses not be built exactly in a straight row so that they may not have the appearance of row houses but rather that of a group of houses. This was favored by the Commission and the design was approved with the understanding that contract drawings of the

houses would be submitted to the Commission later.

7. APARTMENT BUILDING AT 2501 Q STREET, N. W.: Mr. Matthew Lepley, architect, presented a set of contract drawings for an apartment house at 2501 Q Street, N. W. Mr. Lepley said he was glad the Commission had approved the revised design but now the promoters and developers of the apartment project want to change the facade by using limestone sills for the windows instead of limestone lintels. He said the brick sills would be hard to hold in place. The architect members of the Commission discussed the matter with Mr. Lepley and felt it would detract from the appearance of the building to adopt his suggestion.

Incidentally Mr. Lepley said he grew up in the office of T. J. Snyder, who started building apartment houses in Washington about 40 years ago and erected such well known apartment houses as the Cairo, the Rochambeau, the Farragut and others.

A few other matters of detail in regard to the building were also considered. Mr. Lepley said it was proposed to use ordinary red brick. Also he said that the back of the property adjoins a colored cemetery, but that in the case of their building it is proposed to develop a recreational area, tennis courts and the like on that side. On the east side of the building it is intended to erect another unit sometime later. He called attention to the fact that the land at that point drops down 100 feet into the Rock Creek Parkway and the apartment buildingwill scarcely be seen from it.

After consideration the architect members of the Commission felt that to change the facade with its horizontal lines, according to the revised sketch that had been approved would seriously affect the appearance of the building and the Commission disapproved the suggestion accordingly. Mr. Lepley was requested to inform the builders accordingly.

8. RESTAURANT "TODDLE HOUSE", 1971 CALVERT STREET, N. W.: The secretary presented a set of plans (Application No. 843) received from the Building Inspector for a restaurant to be built at the northeast end of the Calvert Street Bridge. These plans had been brought to the attention of Dr. Cret, who had reported as follows:

June 25, 1940.

"The site of the proposed restaurant at the Calvert Street Bridge entrance is well known to me. The plan was somewhat dictated by the desire to make use of the foundations of the building to be torn down. This has resulted in a treatment of the side elevation distinctly inferior to that of the front, and unfortunately, this side elevation is more prominent than the front one, as shown by the photograph.

"The front elevation is entirely satisfactory. Would it be possible to induce the owner to have the rear portion of the building covered by a roof (possibly a copper roof lower than the front part), or if this cannot be obtained, to have a sort of open porch placed in the angle between the toilet #2 and the Transit Co. employees' room, so as to give a more interesting treatment to the west elevation of the building which is in full view from the Bridge?"

The criticisms of Dr. Cret were brought to the attention of Mr. Lamb during his visit to Washington about ten days ago. Mr. Lamb concurred in the suggestions made by Dr. Cret and also in a talk with the architect, who happened to be present at that time, made an additional suggestion for a porch treatment of the rear of the building in place of the plain wall.

The architect presented a revised drawing including these suggestions of Dr. Cret and Mr. Lamb, and this was approved by the Commission.

9. PRECAST CONCRETE PANELS FOR GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS: The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from Senator Glass, inclosing one from Mr. John J. Earley, architectural sculptor, Rosslyn, Virginia, concerning the action of the Commission in disapproving the use of precast concrete stone (Exhibit E) for public buildings; also he had received a letter from Senator Tydings inclosing

a letter from Mr. W. O. Chapman on the same subject (Exhibit E-1). The Chairman read a copy of a letter that the Commission had sent to Mr. Wyeth on the subject, in connection with the building material for the new District of Columbia Armory, as follows:

March 30, 1940.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

At your request, the Commission of Fine Arts is restating its view with respect to materials for facing the National Guard Armory.

The Commission had previously discussed the use of precast exposed aggregate concrete and came to the conclusion that it would be a mistake to use this material since it has not been subjected sufficiently to the test of time. The National Guard Armory will become a portion of a larger composition of buildings at the end of East Capitol Street, and therefore the Armory should be built of material which is lasting and likely to harmonize with other structures to be built there.

The Commission have no objection to utilizing precast architectural concrete slabs for the interior.

Members of the Commission of Fine Arts visited the Naval Testing Basin last Friday afternoon and observed that the exterior is discoloring rapidly. It is leaving black streaks at the joints of the slabs, which in places are also turning yellow. Thus, while the slabs had a clean white appearance some six or eight months ago, this is not true today.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman.

Hon. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

The Chairman reported that he had referred the entire correspondence to Dr. Cret for full report at this meeting. Dr. Cret presented his report as follows:

July 1, 1940.

Subject: Use of precast concrete slabs for Government Buildings.

The Chairman of the
Commission of Fine Arts:

The Commission of Fine Arts consulted in 1939 by the District of Columbia Commissioners and the Municipal Architect, on plans for a proposed Armory to be erected at the end of East Capitol St., made various recommendations, among which, one referred to the materials to be used for the building. The Commission expressed itself as willing to approve the use of precast concrete slabs for the interior of the Armory (as it has done in other cases), but questioned the suitability of these panels for the exterior walls. Its final recommendation was to use limestone for various reasons stated by the members during the discussion.

In 1940, Senator Glass and Senator Tydings submitted letters from Mr. John J. Earley and Mr. W. C. Chapman, questioning this recommendation and requesting a new consideration of the subject;

To the best of my knowledge, the status of the question is as follows:

Mr. Earley has for a number of years made a thorough study of concrete aggregates as building material. He is well informed on the most recent theoretical studies of the properties of concrete made here and abroad, and has accomplished, in my judgment, a distinct advance in the manufacturing of precast slabs as to composition, reinforcement, selection of the aggregates, and process of manufacture. Like all specialists, he is sometimes carried away by his enthusiasm for his special field of research. When criticizing the statement of the Chairman that.. "the durability of precast concrete slabs has not yet stood the test of time when exposed to the elements"...he calls it unfounded because, he says, concrete slabs have been in use for 20 years, structural reinforced concrete for 150, and plain concrete for 2,000.

In an investigation the writer made under the conduct of Mr. Earley himself in Washington, he was not shown any example comparable to the present methods of Mr. Earley dating over 12 years. Reinforced concrete was unknown before the 2nd half, and was not applied to building construction until the last quarter of the 19th Century. As to plain concrete, Mr. Earley has probably in mind the Roman masonry wrongly called "concrete", which is entirely different in technique, is not "poured", and does not include cement.

When concrete construction received its real impetus about 50 years ago --not 150 years ago--we were promised that, at last, a new material was available of unlimited durability. Since then, we have had too frequent occasions to be less sanguine, and anyone who looks at concrete buildings, bridges, or engineering works erected in the past 30 years, can recall the many failures, cracks, unsightly appearance after 10 years or less of exposure to the elements. I hasten to say that within recent years, a more thorough study gives us hope that many mistakes can be avoided in the future if adequate care is exercised.

The fact remains that we are still in the experimental stage, and that, as stated by Mr. Clarke..."the durability of precast concrete slabs has not yet stood the test of time when exposed to the elements." The argument that Government offices, such as the Bureau of Standards, have applied laboratory tests, is not entirely convincing. To quote a report of 1932 of the British Dept. of Scientific & Industrial Research on the effects of weathering:

> "...In time, science may be able to describe with precision the influence of each property of the material on its durability; a just estimate of the mode and extent of its weathering will then be directly deducible from the structure and properties of the material. This is not possible at present..."

This same report, discussing the methods of freezing tests used by the U. S. Bureau of Standards, states..."The fact is, that the life of a building stone is an indeterminate quantity since its life may be regarded as completed, either when the material begins to look unsightly, or when it fails to carry the load imposed on it..."

This point of the material (natural or artificial) becoming unsightly, cannot be determined by any laboratory test, and we have to rely on every-day experience to determine the suitability in this respect of a material, which is done by looking at existing structures put up some years before.

Arguments such as those in the letter of Mr. Chapman to Senator Tydings, or of Mr. Earley to Senator Glass, that the Commission of Fine Arts.. "has no authority to pass on the physical properties of materials", are, therefore, entirely beyond the point, because the Commission has the same right as anyone who is not blind, to look at concrete buildings and state whether they show unsightly weathering, and concludes, in consequence, that it does not seem safe to expect 50 or more years of satisfactory appearance from this or that process of construction. When the Commission will have received a report from the Bureau of Standards guaranteeing the appearance of a new material for a reasonable term of years, it will undoubtedly take a more optimistic view; but such a report has not yet been issued so far as we know. All material shows weathering, particularly in the conditions prevailing in our cities. Some of this weathering is, in fact, pleasant in effect; some of it could better be called "decay", as it is distinctly ugly if not dangerous for safety.

The Commission of Fine Arts, as Adviser to the Government, cannot be blamed for taking a conservative point of view and waiting for the test by time to judge between claims of various materials. This attitude has not prevented the Commission from approving various private uses of the precast concrete slabs in the District of Columbia when the owner himself suggested it and was willing to take the chance.

There is another point to be considered: all those familiar with concrete aggregate manufacture, know that the care in the manufacture is a factor of prime importance. Mr. Earley himself has on many occasions impressed this importance on the writer; the writer, however, is satisfied that Mr. Earley has the professional conscience to give all the required care to his work and can be relied upon, so that with the concurrence or on the request of clients, he selected Mr. Earley as collaborator on various occasions. However, with the rules in force for securing bids on Government work, it is impossible to know who will be entrusted with the manufacture of precast concrete slabs for Government buildings. In the two most important occasions where these slabs have been, or are going to be, used, the contract went to firms other than Mr. Earley's. Even assuming the most exacting supervision, it leaves an element of uncertainty as to the results. As yet, the process cannot be said to be standardized.

To sum up, no one can tell what will be the appearance of buildings faced with precast concrete slabs after ten years or twenty years of exposure to the weather. Some of them, if manufactured by skilful personnel under the proper supervision, may stand the test successfully; some will fail. The Commission has not only the right but the plain duty to call this point to the attention of the Government authorities when consulted on the selection of materials.

Paul P. Cret

The Commission considered Dr. Cret's report and after discussion unanimously approved it. The Commission requested that a copy thereof be sent to Senator Glass and to Senator Tydings. (Exhibits E-2 and E-3).

10. PORTRAIT OF RACHEL DONELSON JACKSON: Under date of June 25, 1940, the following letter was received from the Acting Superintendent of National Capital Parks, F. F. Gillen, as follows:

June 25, 1940.

Gentlemen:

A portrait of Rachel Donelson Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, has been shipped to you by the artist, Cornelius Harkins, 1922 Hillsboro, Nashville, Tennessee. The Tennessee Federation of Democratic Women proposes to purchase this portrait for presentation to the White House. It is submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts by this office for advice as to its artistic merit, and a report from you is desired as soon after the next meeting of the Commission as possible.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter from the artist and copies of letters received from Mrs. Winston Caldwell, Caldwell Lane, Nashville, Tennessee, who represents the group which is desirous of presenting the portrait to the White House. A copy of Mrs. Caldwell's book, "General Jackson's Lady", which contains, opposite the title page, a reproduction by Peale from which the portrait of Mrs. Jackson has been painted, also is enclosed. It is to be noted that the portrait at present has a temporary frame. The artist has asked advice as to the type of permanent frame that should be purchased for the painting in the event that it is accepted for hanging in the White House.

It is requested that the book, "General Jackson's Lady", be returned to this office following consideration of the portrait by the Commission of Fine Arts.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) F. F. Gillen,
Acting Superintendent.

Enclosures 1811881

The portrait was brought to the particular attention of Mr. Savage for comment, who said: "The portrait was painted by a contemporary painter from a miniature worn around the neck of Andrew Jackson and I would suggest omitting the historical association. The painting is not of a standard to be placed in the White House or desirable for Government ownership or acceptance by the Government as a gift. It isn't of sufficient quality to be acceptable to the Government." Mr. Savage prepared a statement which was incorporated in a report sent to Mr. Gillen along with the painting. (Exhibit F)

11. POLICE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN: Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth, Municipal Architect, submitted a design for a memorial fountain proposed for erection in the memory of policemen who had lost their lives in line of duty. The citizens of the District of Columbia have raised $10,000 for the memorial and the committee selected Mr. John J. Earley, architectural sculptor, to design and execute the fountain.

Mr. Earley presented a design of the fountain showing its relationship to the north facade of the administration building of the Municipal Center and

described in detail the use of aggregates of different color he proposes to use in the fountain. He described his scheme as follows: "The idea of the fountain is that it will harmonize with the building behind it. It is an Indiana limestone building with base of reddish granite, the color order in the red granite is not strong; in other words, the granite base is not a color problem. For the fountain base there is a platform on which the fountain stands; we are going to do this part in mosaic that is in balance with the color of the building, with just a little more cream color; then these border lines that surround the fountain itself and some of the little ornaments would be black pebbles and the fields white or a very light yellow; they will be very much like those I did for Dr. Cret in front of the Federal Reserve Board Building. Then as to the fountain itself, this bowl will be dark, very dark in color; the exposed side will be mosaic material, not mosaic material in the tessary form but crushed; however, without a rough surface.

"Then for this upper structure, I do not know just whether I can work the scheme out but the plan I have for this is that all of it is enclosed by a film of water and I thought I would use a clear quartz for the surface, that is, quartz crystals for they are transluscent, if not transparent. I would use a green ceramic of a color that would tie in with the color of the water so that when this fountain is in play the water in the upper section would cause the whole thing to appear as one unit."

Mr. Manship questioned the durability of the material, whereupon Mr. Earley cited the researches of the Army and Navy in connection with recent work, but added that this material is entirely different from cast stone.

The proportion of the bowl to the building was questioned by the architect members of the Commission, but Mr. Earley said that he was restricted to this

size because but $10,000 is available for the memorial. Mr. Clarke reported Dr. Cret says: "The relation of the upper basin to the lower should be varied--either the lower basin is too small or the upper basin is too large." Mr. Wyeth felt this was a very good suggestion. Mr. Manship added the thought that a mass of water running in the fountain would have some effect. Mr. Wyeth said there would always be plenty of water because it will be recirculated. Mr. Earley wondered if the two benches in connection with the memorial would not cause it to appear larger but Mr. Lamb felt they might have just the contrary effect.

After further emphasis on the necessity of the fountain being in proportion to the 65-foot wide pavilion in back of it, Mr. Earley said he would study it with that idea in mind. Mr. Clarke said he had one suggestion he would like to make: "I am wondering just as a method of recalling the building material a little further, would there be any serious objection to leaving the pavement just the way it is suggested and recall the material of the building by making the platform and steps of the same material as the building." Mr. Earley said he had no objection to setting the fountain on a limestone platform.

Mr. Earley was concerned lest the Commission could not give him any criticism on his work until the next meeting in September but he was assured that additional sketches submitted by him would be taken care of specially.

12. NEW DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LIBRARY: Mr. Wyeth submitted a revised design for the new District of Columbia Library to be built along Pennsylvania Avenue between John Marshall Place and Sixth Street. Mr. Wyeth said: "We have another sketch of the library, the plan of which has been changed a very great deal because of library facilities recommended by a committee of library experts. The librarians are satisfied now; they have consulted the leading librarians in this country and that is the plan they have agreed upon as most flexible for

future use in Washington, that is, the type the city of Washington would grow into. There will be no large entrance from Pennsylvania Avenue and we have come around to a corner entrance near John Marshall Place."

Mr. Lamb asked what would be the form of the building that would be built. Mr. Wyeth submitted a plot plan showing where the building would be erected, from which it was seen that it would take a portion of the block, with the whole facade practically on Pennsylvania Avenue. He said: "We are building just this first part, from the break (at the edge of the Ford Building) to the end." Mr. Clarke asked whether the District Government owns the Ford Building, to which Mr. Wyeth replied that the District Government owns the entire block. Mr. Clarke said: "We were looking at the Ford Building last night; it is pretty substantial." Mr. Wyeth said it is now occupied by the traffic bureau. He said the District Government does not want to tear down the other buildings, which include this building and the present Armory. The library extends for about 256 feet to the first break and the Ford Building takes up 22 feet to the corner of John Marshall Place. He said: "The District Government has an appropriation of $1,018,000 and it was with difficulty that they got that much money; and that is all we can build for a million dollars." The height of the building is between 83 and 84 feet and 65 feet to the first set-back.

Mr. Wyeth said it is planned to finish the entire building (which will cost $3,500,000) in a clockwise direction, and the Ford Building will be the last one to be abandoned.

Mr. Lamb said: "I think you have got to treat this as an important step in the final development because the corner which is facing us in the perspective is probably the most important part of the whole group. It forms a gateway to the group later on. Personally, I think it is a much better scheme than you had

before." Mention was made of the sculpture indicated on the building. Mr. Wyeth remarked that there is an unusual amount of it and he had hoped Mr. Manship would notice this fact. He said that he would submit some further drawings as they went along but the library people want his office to start on the working drawings as they are very insistent on getting something started on this. The Commission approved the design and Mr. Wyeth was informed accordingly. (Exhibit G)

13. PAN AMERICAN ANNEX: Mr. Clarke said: "I want to mention briefly this matter of the Pan American Annex. We have four to one on the committee that the President appointed to accept the building in two parts but the District Commissioners will not agree to closing Virginia Avenue. Mr. Ickes has asked for an appointment with the President and he expects to prevail on him to get the District Commissioners to close it. This plan is about all we could work out; it offers the best traffic solution. It is quite important that the building be built; the Pan American Union must expand and the South American Republics are wondering why this thing has not gone ahead, which is embarrassing to Dr. Rowe." Dr. Cret said that the divided building plan is hard on his client both as to cost and as to convenience besides he is very much afraid of criticism. He would like to build the original building where he had placed it. Mr. Clarke said that is an alternate scheme which puts the building on the axis of 18th Street, but the Planning Commission will not have 18th Street closed." Mr. Clarke then showed the Commission Plan No. 2. Mr. Lamb felt that this plan makes a much better area. Mr. Clarke pointed out that it is not a good traffic scheme. Mr. Holabird said; "We are trying to please the South American Republics but it works a hardship on this client if you cut the building in two." Mr. Clarke said that there will be a cellar and a terrace to connect the two buildings. Further, the Pan American

Union has built a tunnel at a cost of $40,000 to connect with the new building. Mr. Lamb said that Dr. Cret is very unhappy about the solution; he says it is inconvenient to build and to lay out.

Mr. Clarke pointed out that some agency has to spend the money to rebuild the streets for Plan No. 2; whereas in the case of Plan No. 1, all that has to be done is to build a small strip because the other streets are already there. He added: "Plan No. 2 requires closing Virginia Avenue and I will agree to that plan but the Park and Planning Commission will not." Mr. Holabird again pointed out that Mr. Clarke's scheme makes it difficult for the client and that the Commission should try to please the Pan American people more than anyone else because there is so much policy in this. Mr. Lamb asked if Mr. Ickes's approval was contingent on keeping that axis open. Mr. Clarke replied in the affirmative and said that the Pan American should be placed on that site rather than in a triangle but Mr. Ickes will not go back to that. He is anxious to have a monument to the American Indian in front.

After further discussion it was decided that Mr. Clarke in representing the Commission should state that the Commission of Fine Arts will concur in either scheme but in the interest of the Pan American Union would favor the plan which does not divide the building. Mr. Clarke said: "I will tell them in the meeting that Dr. Cret prefers that scheme."

"Maritime Commission Bldg."

14. OFFICE BUILDING AT PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE AND 18TH STREET: Mr. A. R. Clas, architect, of Washington, submitted a sketch for an office building near 18th Street fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue, accompanied by a letter as follows:

July 6, 1940.

Fine Arts Commission,
New Interior Dept. Bldg.,
Washington, D. C.

I submit for your consideration and approval data concerning the proposed H Street Office Building to be located on the South side of the street between 18th and 19th Streets North West.

The specifications provide for exterior walls of selected light color brick similar to that used in the Lafayette Building with the exception of the street front and certain portions of the returns which will be of oolitic limestone. Polished Conway Green or dark pearl white granite will be used around the entrance and the 1st and 2nd floor windows. Spandrels between the 1st and 2nd and between the 11th and 12th floors will be of deplated aluminum. First and 2nd floor sash on the street elevation will be of polished alumilited aluminum and all other windows will be of aluminum or steel.

Consideration is being given to a planting strip in front of the building consisting of a clipped hedge of Japanese Holly.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) A. R. Clas

Mr. Clas explained that the building is diagonally across from the old Powhatan Hotel on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue, where it will be located on a quarter of a block with a frontage of 146 feet. The Pennsylvania Avenue facade is to be of limestone. The entrance has been changed to glass up to the second floor. There will be no stores and no show windows. Dr. Cret had made preliminary criticisms that the penthouse is higher than it should be (110 feet is the limit) and further he wanted the corners strengthened and the entrance and parapet restudied. Mr. Clas said: "Incidentally, Mr. Tompkins is arranging to buy the small adjacent building, tear it down part way and build up five stories to coincide with this building." Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Clas how far the limestone goes around on the sides of the building. Mr. Clas informed him that it extends to the windows and is repeated across the top. The Hurley-Wright building hides part of the east wall so there is no use of spending money to cover that with limestone.

Mr. Lamb did not care for the design at all. He said that a facade as big as that treated in the old "waffle-iron scheme" is pretty dull. Mr. Bruce asked

if the penthouse was an important part of the building. Mr. Clas replied that the building is going to be air-conditioned and machinery for it will be in the penthouse but when the engineer's data were available it was found that not so much height was needed.

The Commission criticized the building in executive session. It was noted that while the west end of Pennsylvania Avenue is not so magnificent, that is no excuse for a poorly designed building. There was some question as to how the design came to the Commission. The secretary said that Mr. Clas voluntarily offered to submit it; that the building is on the borderline of the Shipstead-Luce Act area and that it is being financed by the Government, that is, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. It is said the Maritime Commission will occupy the building.

Mr. Lamb considered the building poorly designed architecturally and criticized the treatment of the windows which he likened to holes punched in a wall, and submitted that a vertical treatment in limestone with metal spandrels might be better. He said: "I think he has a grand opportunity to get a vertical treatment right down to the ground, which you don't very often have except in a Government building where there are no show windows."

Mr. Clas came back into the meeting. Mr. Lamb having been made spokesman, said: "We were suggesting, particularly in view of the fact that you do not have show windows or bank spaces, the possibility of a vertical treatment going right from your 110' setback down to the ground without a break. The design would be more coherent and you would get rid of the effect of many windows poked in a perfectly flat wall."

Mr. Clas said: "We are working on the working drawings now because it is desired that the building be finished by the first of the year. Among sketches

I made first was one for a vertical building." Mr. Lamb asked Mr. Clas if he had some of the other studies he had made available. Mr. Clas said that he would look them up and send them to the Commission. Also he said that he had tried the vertical treatment and did not like it so well but if the Commission desired, he would make up some sketches. Mr. Clarke suggested some attention be given to the design of the main entrance. Mr. Clas replied that he had in mind treating it frankly as an entrance two stories in height. Mr. Clas agreed to restudy the elevations.

16. MARCONI MEMORIAL: Donald Kline, landscape architect of the National Park Service, stated that the Marconi Memorial Association finally appointed some one to make a landscape plan for the Marconi Memorial, and if this plan prepared by Mr. Joseph C. Gardner, landscape architect, is all right for this location and is approved by the Commission, the Association intends to go ahead. The Park Service puts in the furnishings, such as benches. Mr. Clarke asked whether the Marconi Association is going to put the elms in on the streets. Mr. Kline replied that that is a part of the job. Existing maples and existing elms were noted on the plan. Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Gardner about the circulation, that is, paths on the monument site. Mr. Gardner said: "Due to the limited sum to do the work, we thought it would be well to consider a low cost material for the walk so we propose using a stone base with blacktop and metal edge; that seems to be the most economical. That would stand out in nice contrast with the granite of the memorial." Mr. Clarke asked how wide the sidewalk is. Mr. Gardner replied that it is 7'6", allowing about two feet for a bench. It was stated that the same kind of bench is to be used as those in Lafayette Park. Mr. Clarke questioned whether a walk 7½ feet wide was enough; the bench on the walk takes up 2½ feet, then people's feet take some room and that leaves about three or four feet. He felt it should be a 10-foot walk instead of 7'6". Mr. Gardner

said: "There is parking of cars by church members who at the present time make use of that four or five foot wide strip at the west side of the reservation. It will be hard to maintain. We propose using Japanese barberry hedge so that it will grow on the edge and so there will be no approach to the walk area." Mr. Clarke advised Mr. Gardner: "You can't make a hedge on the curb; people will open the doors to their cars and damage the hedge. You will have trouble also in raising a barberry hedge under the shade of elm trees. I wonder if you should not pave right to the curb and put your benches on the other side and use that pavement of granite block or something of that sort because your hedge will be a pretty bad looking affair." Mr. Gardner replied: "Of course, that is a very good suggestion; I was trying to get as much value in planting as possible. In this hedge we are using evergreen privet; in the foreground there are eight flowering dogwoods and there are also some very nice Washington thorns. We have suggested Japanese yew with two little plots of that material; that will give a dark evergreen material at the base." Mr. Clarke noted craetagus at the back of the monument. Mr. Gardner said they were using ground cover, vinca minor and pachysandra. Mr. Clarke recommended extending the walk on the west side of the monument for otherwise people will tramp the planting down. Also he suggested using brick under the trees. Mr. Gardner said they would use pierced brick on a sand cushion. Mr. Kline suggested that it would be desirable to restrict parking on that side of the roadway because it is very narrow anyway. Mr. Clarke said signs can be put there but people with automobiles will stop to let a passenger out and damage the hedge.

Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Manning about the progress of the statue. Mr. Manning said that so far as he could understand from the sculptor, it is being cast in bronze. Mr. Manship said he saw the full-sized model and approved it.

Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Manning what the surface treatment of the pedestal is and was informed that the pedestal will be of Stony Creek granite, honed and with axed treads; he added that the inscription is just the word, "Marconi", with dates incized in the granite. His firm has not yet received drawings of the inscription; in fact, their contact is predicated on the landscape.

A report of approval of the landscape plan with the understanding that the recommendations of the Commission will be incorporated in the final plan was sent to Mr. Samuel Di Falco, Secretary of the Marconi Memorial Association. (Exhibit H) (Mr. Clarke approved the completed drawing submitted by Mr. Gardner on July 16, 1940; this drawing showed 10-foot sidewalks.)

16. BUS TERMINAL, BARNEY CIRCLE: Mr. Kline submitted a set of contract drawings for the proposed bus terminal at Barney Circle, at the entrance to the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, S. E. Mr. Clarke called the Commission's attention to the fact that these had been submitted in a preliminary stage and that it had been suggested a flat roof be used. Mr. Kline said that these drawings were made by the Transit Company; that his office had given them details for their guidance and they had followed them quite faithfully. He said that there is a detail to be determined whether the roof should be flat or pitched, which is a matter of character more than anything else. Mr. Clarke asked whether this is a standing seam metal roof in copper or sheet metal. The architect of the Transit Company said that that was a matter pending a decision as to details. Mr. Clarke advised that a tin roof was undesirable because it has to be painted every year.

It was noted that there would be a limestone entrance, the trim in limestone and the building designed in a modified Georgian style of architecture. Mr. Clarke asked the Commission whether it preferred the hip or flat roof. Dr. Cret preferred the flat roof. Mr. Lamb asked how the drainage would be taken care of and

the Commission was informed there would be a drain through the center of the roof. Mr. Clarke asked if they intended to paint the brick white and was informed that a good grade of brick is being used.

A report was sent to the National Park Service approving the design with a flat roof. It was understood that the minor suggestions made by the architect members would be embodied in the construction work. (Exhibit I)

17. BUS TERMINAL AT ROSSLYN, VIRGINIA: Mr. Kline submitted contract drawings for a bus terminal at Rosslyn, Virginia. He said, "Preliminary drawings were given general approval. This is a little site plan showing the location. It is just an inclosure now such that it can be filled in if this ever becomes a major terminal; right now they do not need very extensive facilities as most buses run into the city but some day they may need it; hence the building is designed on that basis." Mr. Clarke asked why there should not be a flat roof on this one too. Mr. Kline said there should be no objection to it; also here they have more room for a little more width than at Barney Circle. There was some discussion of the drain and gutters. The Transit Company representative said the drain would be inside the building through the center. It was decided that the roof should be flat. A report of approval was sent to the National Park Service. (Exhibit J)

18. THOMAS JEFFERSON MEMORIAL: Mr. Kline submitted in behalf of the National Park Service two designs for a slight change in the sea wall of the Tidal Basin near the steps at the approach to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The design by Mr. Olmsted suggested the effect of two granite piers in low reveal from the basin elevation. The design by Mr. Eggers suggested simplification of the above to leave the effect of only one pier in low reveal. The Commission expressed its preference for the design by Mr. Eggers.

19. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND LIBRARY FOR THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS: Mr. Otto Eggers, architect, submitted in behalf of the firm of Waid, Baum and Eggers a design for the administration building and library of the American Institute of Architects to be built on their grounds at 18th Street and New York Avenue, N. W.

The Commission inspected the design and noted that it was in the Georgian style of architecture to conform to the historic Octagon House, which is now the headquarters of the American Institute of Architects. It was also noted from the plan that it is proposed to erect the building parallel with the Lemon Building on the east side of the grounds but that there will be a slight bend to the west to connect with the old barn so that the garden will be entirely inclosed. There is to be a special entrance to the grounds from New York Avenue. It was stated that it is proposed to use the Octagon building later for museum purposes.

The Commission unanimously approved the design and a report was sent to Mr. Eggers accordingly. (Exhibit K)

20. COLUMBIA ISLAND PLAZA: Mr. Kline submitted an estimate for not over $300,000 for the continuation of the Arlington Memorial Bridge project. The project calls for completion of the abutments on Columbia Island. He said: "We are trying to work up a simpler solution. The original scheme calls for half a million to complete. It is a question whether we can do it for about $250,000 and with the rest do the planting at the memorial entrance."

The Commission inspected the Columbia Island Plaza plans. Mr. Kline said that he wants to make a general use of the island and to bind these pylons together with trees to give the suggestion of a big pylon rather than pull them together with a four-foot balustrade. Mr. Clarke said: "I think you ought to square the end off so it is more monumental in plan and place the steps at the

side." Mr. Clarke further suggested that in place of steps a ramp might be advisable. Mr. Lamb and Dr. Cret also suggested a ramp.

The plans for the plaza will be presented again to the Commission when the project assumes little more definite proportions.

21. EXTENSION TO THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD BUILDING: Dr. Cret submitted a memorandum on the subject of a proposed extension to the Federal Reserve Building, as follows:

1. At the request of the Federal Reserve Board, the plans of the existing building were designed with provision for a future increase in floor area. This was accomplished by leaving the space between the vertical branches of the "H", along 20th and 21st Streets open for the present, but foundations were placed in toward future closing.

2. Recently, the Board has requested the architect to prepare drawings for this addition although there is a division of opinion among its members; some of them are afraid that it will be detrimental to the appearance of the building.

It is on this point that the opinion of the Commission of Fine Arts is sought.

A block plan, an elevation of the proposed addition along either 20th or 21st Streets and photographs of present conditions are appended.

3. It is submitted as additional information:

a. This addition, as stated above, is not an afterthought but was already provided in the early plans submitted to this Commission.

b. The courtyards, due to some features of the plan, show a certain complication in design which might be screened to advantage.

c. The question of ventilation through the courtyards open on one side is not important as the building is air-conditioned and in consequence all windows are kept closed all year round.

4. The extension of the building on the lot north of present property is another question which will come before the Commission in time. This ought not to bear on the advice sought from the Commission on the appearance of the present building should the addition be found necessary.

The Chairman informed Dr. Cret in behalf of the Commission that it was understood that the building would be enlarged sometime later. The Commission

interposed no objection to the scheme to close the courts. Dr. Cret said he was not really making a submission of the design at present but simply wanted comment from the Commission concerning the matter. Dr. Cret sent a letter on the subject to Chester Morrill, Secretary of the Federal Reserve Board. (Exhibit L)

22. EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING THE SECTION OF FINE ARTS, FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY: Mr. Bruce submitted a copy of an Executive Order of the President making the Section of Fine Arts a permanent establishment of the Public Buildings Office, Federal Works Agency. The Commission were pleased to hear this and took note of the order. (Exhibit M)

23. NAVY AND MARINE MEMORIAL: Mr. Kline again brought up the matter of the Navy and Marine Memorial and submitted sketches for completing the base. He said it is going to be a W. P. A. project and since the appropriation is only about $30,000 they cannot go into anything like the original scheme. He said: "We have made studies of these architectural ends and the rest of it is a landscape matter, grading and so on. We are going to put some vines over this concrete and some planting, which will grow as high as four feet." Mr. Clarke suggested that Mr. Kline could have the concrete taken out and the space filled up with soil and then planted to grass. Mr. Lamb felt there was a lot of architecture in connection with the base. Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Kline if the lines could be kept simpler for there seem to be too many elements in so small a memorial. He suggested putting a ramp up the side instead of approaching it squarely and use no architecture at all. Mr. Kline said he would make further studies and submit them to the Commission.

(Mr. Clarke approved a completed landscape plan submitted by Mr. Kline on July 16, 1940.)

24. PAINTINGS FOR THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT: Mr. Bruce stated that Hon. E. K. Burlew, First Assistant Secretary, Interior Department, had requested him to ask the Commission of Fine Arts to inspect a number of large paintings that were on exhibition in the gallery of the Interior Department Building and that had been offered for placement in the building. The Commission inspected them and felt they were unsuitable for a permanent exhibition in the Interior Department Building.

25. ADAMS "MEMORIAL" PLAQUE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE: Pursuant to a suggestion of President Roosevelt in December, 1938, the Commission had agreed to placing the following inscription in the White House:

> "I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house, and on all that shall thereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof!"
>
> From letter of John Adams to his wife,
> second November, 1800

The President decided to have it placed in the State Dining Room, on the central panel of the frieze of the stone mantel on the west side of the room, carved into the stone. Mr. Manship conferred with Mr. Eric Gugler concerning the matter and both visited the White House at noon to determine the design of the inscription. The Commission concurred in the action taken.

26. FREER GALLERY OF ART PURCHASES: The Commission inspected a number of works of art at the Freer Gallery, offered for purchase by Mr. John E. Lodge, Curator. These consisted for the most part of paintings. The Commission inspected these objects of art and approved them. (Exhibit N)

The Commission adjourned at 4:00 p. m.

C O P Y

July 8, 1940.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

This letter supplements my communication to you dated June 27th, with respect to the ceramics that are being made for the court of the Municipal Center building by Miss Hildreth Meiere and Mr. Waylande Gregory. It was not clear in the letter that the Commission of Fine Arts has given final approval to the studies which were examined by Messrs. Savage and Manship and that no further inspection is deemed necessary.

I should be glad if you would notify the artists that so far as the Commission of Fine Arts is concerned they may proceed with the completion of the work.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

July 8, 1940.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

At the request of the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, Mr. Paul Manship, sculptor, member of the Commission, inspected the model by John Gregory for the cheek block on one side of the steps of the Municipal Center development on John Marshall Place, and the full-sized model was approved enthusiastically.

Further, Mr. Manship visited the studio of Lee Lawrie to inspect his full-sized model for the companion sculptural relief to the foregoing, and likewise approved this finished model enthusiastically.

The Commission of Fine Arts would be pleased to have you notify the artists that their work has the unanimous approval of the Commission of Fine Arts, so that the artists may proceed with the carving whenever you are ready.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

June 27, 1940.

Dear Mr. Hopper:

I have received your letter of June 19, with its inclosure of photographs of the full-sized clay model and plaster cast by Richmond Barthe of the eagle medallion for the Social Security Building in Washington, D. C. Upon the recommendation of Mr. Manship, who has inspected the models, the Commission of Fine Arts approve them.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Inslee A. Hopper,
Consultant to the Chief,
Section of Fine Arts,
Public Buildings Administration,
Federal Works Agency,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

C O P Y

July 8, 1940.

Gentlemen:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting today had under consideration Application No. 844, dated June 11, for residence at 2300 Porter Street, N. W.

The Commission of Fine Arts advises that since the National Capital Park and Planning Commission is negotiating with the owner to purchase land included in this submission, the status of the submission apparently is changed. When negotiations are completed, the matter should be resubmitted.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington

June 17, 1940

Mr. Gilmore Clarke,

Fine Arts Commission,

Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Clarke:

Adverting to previous correspondence and particularly to your letter of May 18th, may I invite your attention to the attached letter from Mr. John J. Earley, of the Earley Studios, Rosslyn, Virginia, and request that you give it careful consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Carter Glass

EXHIBIT E

JOHN J. EARLEY
Architectural Sculptor
Studio
Rosslyn, Virginia

May 29th., 1940.

Honorable Carter Glass,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Glass:

I greatly appreciate your courtesy in permitting me to comment on the letter dated May 18th to you from Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke, Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, relating to the use of precast concrete slabs on the exterior of the new National Guard Armory at Washington, D. C.

I have the highest regard for the Commission of Fine Arts, indeed some of its members are among my most valued clients. However; in this particular instance I am convinced that the Commission acted without proper information and beyond its conferred powers. I fear that such an action, because of the great esteem in which the Commission is held, by all, might work a great injustice to new materials and to new technique inspired by modern scientific knowledge of old materials; it might also deprive those advised by the Commission of the benefits afforded by new materials and improved methods.

Permit me to quote from the second paragraph of Mr. Clarke's letter "The durability of precast concrete slabs has not yet stood the test of time when exposed to the elements." The Commission has expressed itself as willing to approve a recommendation for the use of precast concrete slabs for the interior of the Armory. There seems to be no question here save of durability in exposure to the elements.

I feel that this ruling should not be allowed to stand unquestioned because it is not in my opinion well founded; it might be taken to mean that if the history of precast concrete slabs during the past twenty years and of structural reinforced concrete during the past one hundred fifty years and more generally of plain concrete during two thousand years be inadequate to establish its durability when exposed to the weather; then just as arbitrarily thousands of future years might be required to establish its durability or that of any new material.

Precast concrete slabs of the type under consideration are made with crushed quartz and portland cement reinforced with an electrically welded mesh of galvanized steel wire. They afford a use of quartz in architecture which has previously been uneconomic because of the great hardness of that material. These slabs are therefore a new use of very old materials. Their durability has already been reported by scientific investigations conducted by the Navy Department and the Bureau of Standards.

I wish that the Commission of Fine Arts would reconsider its action and withdraw its disapproval of precast concrete slabs for exterior use. In my opinion the Commission, with all due respect to it, is not qualified to pass judgment on the physical properties of materials nor on the factor of time proper to the determination of their durability in exposure to the elements; nor is the Commission, if I understand its constitution as recorded U. S. Code of Laws, 1934, Edition, Page 1776, paragraph 104, empowered to advise upon the physical properties of structural materials.

Permit me to invite you to visit the studio while you are still in Washington. It is located at Rosslyn, Virginia, and I would like you to see some of the beautiful things we make with quartz mined in Virginia. I am sure you will enjoy the visit.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) John J. Earley.

JJE:LTD.

UNITED STATES SENATE

June 7, 1940

Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Clarke:

I received your letter regarding the use of precast concrete panels for the new District of Columbia Armory.

I submitted the information contained therein to Mr. W. O. Chapman, who had previously contacted me relative to this matter. I am now in receipt of another letter from Mr. Chapman which I am submitting to you for your consideration and attention.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) M. E. Tydings.

EXHIBIT E-1

THE SHOREHAM
Washington, D. C.

3245 Ellicott St.
June 3rd, 1940.

Hon. M. E. Tydings,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Tydings:

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to comment on Mr. Clarke's letter of May 24th.

The act creating the Commission of Fine Arts gives no authority to pass on the physical properties of materials and I do not believe the Commission is scientifically equipped or qualified to investigate the durability of materials. However Mr. Clarke states that a careful investigation was made at the Naval Testing Basin. Will you please be so kind as to ask Mr. Clarke for a copy of their findings, the minutes of the meeting, the names of the members who participated and the officials contacted at the Testing Basin.

At the suggestion of the White House, the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Dept., in collaboration with the National Bureau of Standards, has completed a thorough scientific investigation of this material, which I believe will relieve the Commission of all doubt as to its durability and weatherability. I understand a copy of this report will be furnished at the request of the Commission.

Mr. Clarke also states that precast concrete slabs has not yet stood the test of time when exposed to the elements. These slabs have been manufactured for the past twenty years, are made of crushed quartz and portland cement, with steel reinforcements; the quartz aggregate are exposed by grinding and brushing. This quartz, the hardest stone ever used in a building, has been exposed to the elements for centuries and plain concrete has been in use two thousand years, so there should be no question as to their ability to withstand the elements.

Dr. Paul Cret, one of the nations leading architects, who was recently appointed to the Commission, is using this material on the new Naval Medical Center and has used it on numerous other buildings.

In view of the above and the fact that three new members have been appointed to the Commission recently, I think it only fair that this matter should be reconsidered, with the benefit of the experiences of the new members and the Bureau of Yards and Docks report.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) W. O. Chapman.

C O P Y

July 16, 1940.

Dear Senator Glass:

In further reference to your letter of June 17th, with which you transmitted a communication from Mr. John J. Earley of Rosslyn, Virginia, concerning the use of precast concrete slabs on the exterior of government buildings, I have the honor to inform you that your correspondence was brought to the particular attention of Dr. Paul P. Cret, architect, member of the Commission of Fine Arts, for report.

Dr. Cret's report was given consideration at a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held July 8th and was unanimously approved. A copy of the report is attached hereto.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Hon. Carter Glass,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT E-2

C O P Y

July 16, 1940.

Dear Senator Tydings:

In further reference to your letter of June 7th, with which you transmitted a communication from Mr. W. O. Chapman, 3245 Ellicott Street, Washington, D. C., concerning the use of precast concrete slabs on the exterior of government buildings, I have the honor to inform you that your correspondence was brought to the particular attention of Dr. Paul P. Cret, architect, member of the Commission of Fine Arts, for report.

Dr. Cret's report was given careful consideration at a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held July 8th and was unanimously approved. A copy of the report is attached hereto.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Hon. Millard E. Tydings,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT E-3

C O P Y

July 1, 1940.

Subject: Use of precast concrete slabs for Government Buildings

The Chairman of the
Commission of Fine Arts:

The Commission of Fine Arts consulted in 1939 by the District of Columbia Commissioners and the Municipal Architect, on plans for a proposed Armory to be erected at the end of East Capitol Street, made various recommendations, among which, one referred to the materials to be used for the building. The Commission expressed itself as willing to approve the use of precast concrete slabs for the interior of the Armory (as it has done in other cases), but questioned the suitability of these panels for the exterior walls. Its final recommendation was to use limestone for various reasons stated by the members during the discussion.

In 1940, Senator Glass and Senator Tydings submitted letters from Mr. John J. Earley and Mr. W. O. Chapman, questioning this recommendation and requesting a new consideration of the subject.

To the best of my knowledge, the status of the question is as follows:

Mr. Earley has for a number of years made a thorough study of concrete aggregates as building material. He is well informed on the most recent theoretical studies of the properties of concrete made here and abroad, and has accomplished, in my judgment, a distinct advance in the manufacturing of precast slabs as to composition, reinforcement, selection of the aggregates, and process of manufacture. Like all specialists, he is sometimes carried away by his enthusiasm for his special field of research. When criticizing the statement of the Chairman that..."the durability of precast concrete slabs has not yet stood the test of time when exposed to the elements"...he calls it unfounded because, he says, concrete slabs have been in use for 20 years, structural reinforced concrete for 150, and plain concrete for 2,000.

In an investigation the writer made under the conduct of Mr. Earley himself in Washington, he was not shown any example comparable to the present methods of Mr. Earley dating over 12 years. Reinforced concrete was unknown before the 2nd half, and was not applied to building construction until the last quarter of the 19th Century. As to plain concrete, Mr. Earley has probably in mind the Roman masonry wrongly called "concrete", which is entirely different in technique, is not "poured", and does not include cement.

When concrete construction received its real impetus about 50 years ago--not 150 years ago--we were promised that, at last, a new material was available of unlimited durability. Since then, we have had too frequent

occasions to be less sanguine, and anyone who looks at concrete buildings, bridges, or engineering works erected in the past 30 years, can recall the many failures, cracks, unsightly appearance after 10 years or less of exposure to the elements. I hasten to say that within recent years, a more thorough study gives us hope that many mistakes can be avoided in the future if adequate care is exercised.

The fact remains that we are still in the experimental stage, and that, as stated by Mr. Clarke..."the durability of precast concrete slabs has not yet stood the test of time when exposed to the elements." The argument that Government offices, such as the Bureau of Standards, have applied laboratory tests, is not entirely convincing. To quote a report of 1932 of the British Dept. of Scientific & Industrial Research on the effects of weathering:

> "...In time, science may be able to describe with precision the influence of each property of the material on its durability; a just estimate of the mode and extent of its weathering will then be directly deducible from the structure and properties of the material. This is not possible at present..."

This same report, discussing the methods of freezing tests used by the U. S. Bureau of Standards, states..."The fact is, that the life of a building stone is an indeterminate quantity since its life may be regarded as completed, either when the material begins to look unsightly, or when it fails to carry the load imposed on it..."

This point of the material (natural or artificial) becoming unsightly, cannot be determined by any laboratory test, and we have to rely on every-day experience to determine the suitability in this respect of a material, which is done by looking at existing structures put up some years before.

Arguments such as those in the letter of Mr. Chapman to Senator Tydings, or of Mr. Earley to Senator Glass, that the Commission of Fine Arts.. "has no authority to pass on the physical properties of materials", are, therefore, entirely beyond the point, because the Commission has the same right as anyone who is not blind, to look at concrete buildings and state whether they show unsightly weathering, and conclude, in consequence, that it does not seem safe to expect 50 or more years of satisfactory appearance from this or that process of construction. When the Commission will have received a report from the Bureau of Standards guaranteeing the appearance of a new material for a reasonable term of years, it will undoubtedly take a more optimistic view; but such a report has not yet been issued so far as we know. All material shows weathering, particularly in the conditions prevailing in our cities. Some of this weathering is, in fact, pleasant in effect; some of it could better be called "decay", as it is distinctly ugly if not dangerous for safety.

The Commission of Fine Arts, as Adviser to the Government, cannot be blamed for taking a conservative point of view and waiting for the test by time to judge between claims of various materials. This attitude has not prevented the Commission from approving various private uses of the precast concrete slabs in the District of Columbia when the owner himself suggested it and was willing to take the chance.

There is another point to be considered: all those familiar with concrete aggregate manufacture, know that the care in the manufacture is a factor of prime importance. Mr. Earley himself has on many occasions impressed this importance on the writer; the writer, however, is satisfied that Mr. Earley has the professional conscience to give all the required care to his work and can be relied upon, so that with the concurrence or on the request of clients, he selected Mr. Earley as collaborator on various occasions. However, with the rules in force for securing bids on Government work, it is impossible to know who will be entrusted with the manufacture of precast concrete slabs for Government buildings. In the two most important occasions where these slabs have been, or are going to be, used, the contract went to firms other than Mr. Earley's. Even assuming the most exacting supervision, it leaves an element of uncertainty as to the results. As yet, the process cannot be said to be standardized.

To sum up, no one can tell what will be the appearance of buildings faced with precast concrete slabs after ten years or twenty years of exposure to the weather. Some of them, if manufactured by skilful personnel under the proper supervision, may stand the test successfully; some will fail. The Commission has not only the right but the plain duty to call this point to the attention of the Government authorities when consulted on the selection of materials.

PAUL P. CRET

C O P Y

July 11, 1940.

Dear Mr. Gillen:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on July 8, 1940, considered the portrait of Rachel Donelson Jackson by Cornelius Hankins of Nashville, Tennessee, which was submitted by your office.

The Commission advise that this portrait, recently completed from a miniature and intended for purchase and installation in the White House, has been viewed by the Commission; it is their opinion that considered as a work of art, and notwithstanding its historical connection, the painting does not warrant acceptance. The painting is being returned to you.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. F. F. Gillen,
Acting Superintendent,
National Capital Parks,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT F

C O P Y

July 11, 1940.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on July 8, 1940, approved the design which you submitted for the new District of Columbia Library to face Pennsylvania Avenue at John Marshall Place.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT G

C O P Y

July 11, 1940.

Dear Mr. DiFalco:

I am pleased to inform you that the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on July 8, 1940, approved the landscape plan for the Marconi Memorial at 16th and Lamont Streets, N. W., designed by Joseph C. Gardner, landscape architect. The Commission made one or two minor suggestions in matters of detail which will be incorporated in the construction work. The Commission had heretofore approved the design for the pedestal, which it is understood will be of Stony Creek granite and will be erected by the J. F. Manning Company of this city.

The Commission will be glad to have you submit the wording of the inscription proposed for the memorial.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. S. Samuel DiFalco,
270 Broadway,
New York, N. Y.

EXHIBIT H

C O P Y

July 11, 1940.

Dear Sirs:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on July 8, 1940, approved the design submitted for the bus terminal to be built by the Capital Traction Company at Barney Circle, 17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, S. E., with flat roof for the building.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

National Park Service,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT I

C O P Y

July 11, 1940.

Dear Sirs:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on July 8, 1940, approved the design submitted for the bus terminal to be built by the Capital Traction Company at Rosslyn, Virginia, with flat roof.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT J

C O P Y

July 11, 1940.

Dear Mr. Eggers:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on July 8, 1940, approved the design by Messrs. Waid, Baum and Eggers, associated architects, submitted for the library and administration building of the American Institute of Architects, to be erected on their grounds at Eighteenth Street and New York Avenue.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman.

Mr. Otto R. Eggers, Architect,
542 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

EXHIBIT K

C O P Y

July 9, 1940.

Chester Morrill, Esq., Secretary,
Federal Reserve Board,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Morrill:

At a meeting of the Fine Arts Commission, I submitted informally the question of closing the courtyards of the present building along 20th and 21st Streets.

The Commission considered the appearance of the building if the suggested extension is carried out, and I am authorized to say that they approve the design and feel that it would improve the present conditions along these two streets.

The plans would receive approval when formally submitted.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Paul P. Cret.

PPC:w

cc to Mr. Clarke.

EXHIBIT L

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY

Washington

Office of the Administrator

#12

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: TO MAKE THE SECTION OF FINE ARTS, PUBLIC BUILDINGS ADMINISTRATION AN INTEGRAL PART THEREOF.

AUTHORIZATION: Pursuant to the terms and provisions of the Order of the Federal Works Administrator, dated July 1, 1939 it is ordered:

1. The Section of Fine Arts is hereby constituted an integral part of the Public Buildings Administration. The Chief of said section shall be directly responsible to the Commissioner of Public Buildings.

2. It shall be the function of said Section to obtain provision for the location of Sculptures, Murals, and other appropriate works of Art in the designing and planning of Public Buildings, and to select and supervise artists for the execution thereof.

3. The Supervising Architect, the Designing Committee, and Consulting Architects are hereby directed to submit the preliminary and other sketches and plans for public buildings which have or may have relation to the provision of space for works of Art therein to the Chief, Section of Fine Arts, for such suggested revision as he may deem desirable to provide for appropriate works of Art. Said revision, if deemed feasible by said designing and planning Officers shall be incorporated in the final designs and plans. If not deemed feasible said Officers shall submit to the Supervising Architect a report specifying the objections thereto. The Supervising Architect shall consider and determine said objections subject to an appeal by the Chief, Section of Fine Arts to the Commissioner for final determination.

4. The Fiscal Manager shall reserve and set aside in the Statement of Account not less than 1% of the estimated cost of buildings to provide for works of art therefor and a greater percentage, not exceeding 3%, if the Commissioner

EXHIBIT M

shall so direct. If bids for the construction of the building are in excess of the amount available, the revised Statement of Account shall nevertheless set aside and reserve not less than 1% of the revised estimate for such purpose.

5. If the Chief, Section of Fine Arts shall consider the space provided for works of Art in any public building as designed insufficient, he shall submit to the officers of the Administration concerned with designing and planning, proposals for additional space for works of art to be executed when funds therefor shall be available.

6. The selection of artists and the execution of works of Art shall proceed along with the construction of a building provided however, that no contracts for works of Art shall be let or liabilities contracted by the Chief, Section of Fine Arts without the express approval of the Commissioner of Public Buildings Administration.

/s/ W. E. Reynolds

O.K.
E.B.

Approved: /s/ JOHN M. CARMODY
Federal Works Administrator

Approved: April 12, 1940 Date: April 1, 1940

O K

F D R

The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, The Commission of Fine Arts, and Miss Katharine N. Rhoades, as provided in Paragraph 4 of the Codicil to the Will of the late Charles L. Freer, have examined the following objects:

1 Bronze animal. Chinese, Late Chou dynasty, 6th-3rd century B. C.

1 Porcelain vase (pale grey-green). Chinese, K'ang Hsi period, 17th-18th century.

1 Porcelain vase (blood red). Chinese, K'ang Hsi period, 17th-18th century.

1 Painting. Indian, Rajput, Deccan, early 17th century.

1 Miniature painting (woman standing). Indian, Mughal-Rajput, 17th century.

1 Miniature painting (a group of dervishes). Persian, 16th-17th century. (Brush drawing).

1 Illuminated Frontispiece. Arabic (Egypt), 14th-15th century.

1 Miniature painting. Persian, 15th century.

2 Miniature paintings (small size) from a Shāhnāmah. Persian, Mongol school, late 14th century.

2 Miniature paintings from a Shāhnāmah. Persian, Mongol period, 14th century.

1 Manuscript (bound section of the Koran). Persian, 13th century.

1 Pottery bowl. West Asian, Rakka.

1 Bowl, brass inlaid with silver. Persian, 12th-13th century,

EXHIBIT N

which have been recommended for purchase for the Freer Gallery of Art by Mr. John E. Lodge, Director, and hereby approve the purchase.

For the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution

For the Commission of Fine Arts

July 8th, 1940.

Katharine N. Rhoades

Jun 15, 2017